

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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R 141229Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6775

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 DUBLIN 855

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV, EI, UK (NI)

SUBJECT: GOI FIRM ON POWER-SHARING NI SOLUTION

REF: DUBLIN 796, DUBLIN 692

SUMMARY: GOI STRONGLY BELIEVES THAT ANY STABLE SOLUTION TO NI PROBLEM MUST BE ACCEPTED BY BOTH CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT COMMUNITIES, WHICH MEANS THAT CATHOLICS MUST BE GIVEN A SHARE IN REAL POLITICAL POWER. IRISH CONSIDER BRITISH FORMALLY COMMITTED TO POWER-SHARING AND INTEND TO HOLD THEM TO THE COMMITMENT. IF GOI BELIEVES THAT LONDON PLANS TURN POWER OVER TO A GOVT OF PROTESTANT SUPREMACISTS, IRISH WILL ASK US AND OTHER FRIENDLY GOVTS FOR SUPPORT. IN ARRIVING AT THIS POSITION, GOI HAD TO OVERCOME DISSENT FROM CONOR CRUISE-O'BRIEN, BUT IRISH POLICY NOW APPEARS CLEAR AND REASONABLE FOR FIRST TIME IN A LONG WHILE. EMBASSY THINKS THERE ARE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH USG MIGHT WISH RESPOND TO AN IRISH REQUEST FOR SUPPORT, BUT WE ARE INCLINED TO DOUBT THAT THE PROBLEM WILL ARISE IN NEAR FUTURE. END SUMMARY

1. MCCOLGAN, FONOFF ANGLO/IRISH DIVISION, BRIEFED US MAY 13 ON GOI POLICY IN LIGHT OF THE PROTESTANT TRIUMPH IN NI CONVENTION ELECTIONS. HE STARTED BY SAYING THAT GOI POLICY ON NI IS VOICED ONLY BY PM COSGRAVE AND FONMIN FITZGERALD. THE VIEWS OF CONOR CRUISE-CONFIDENTIAL

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O'BRIEN, MIISTER OF POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS, DO NOT REFLECT GOI VIEWS

ON CURRENT NI SITUATION. THIS WAS REFERENCE TO CRUISE-O'BRIEN'S STATED OPINION (DUBLIN 796) THAT NEITHER DUBLIN NOR LONDON COULD FORCE ACCEPTANCE OF POWER-SHARING ON DECISIVE "LOYALIST" MAJORITY IN THE NEW CONVENTION. GOI AS A WHOLE, MCCOLGAN SAID, IS TOTALLY AT VARIANCE WITH CRUISE-O'BRIEN ON THIS POINT. IN PARTICULAR, GOI BELIEVES THAT LONDON HAS THE ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN NI AND THAT IT MUST NOT HAND GOVERNMENTAL POWERS OVER TO A HARD-LINE PROTESTANT GROUP WHICH WISHES TO REVERT TO SECTARIAN DOMINATION OF CATHOLICS. LONDON MUST NOT, IN OTHER WORDS, "GO BACK TO 1969," DESPITE SOME CURRENT DISCUSSION IN THE CONSERVATIVE PRESS OF THIS OPTION. NOT ONLY WOULD SUCH A RETROGRESSION BE WRONG IN PRINCIPLE, BUT IT WOULD QUARANTEE EVEN WORSE VIOLENCE. GOI BELIEVES THAT NO NI POLITICAL SYSTEM CAN POSSIBLY WORK UNLESS IT HAS ACCEPTANCE OF BOTH CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT COMMUNITIES, AND THAT LONDON MUST ASSURE SUCH ACCEPTANCE BEFORE CONSIDERING ANY FORM OF DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT.

2. GOI HOPES THAT USG WILL EXPRESS SIMILAR VIEWS TO THE BRITISH IF LONDON SHOULD APPEAR TO BE WAVERING IN ITS RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD NI. IN SUCH A CIRCUMSTANCE, GOI WOULD ASK ALL FRIENDLY COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD TO URGE THE BRITISH NOT TO RETURN NI TO ANY SYSTEM OF PROTESTANT DOMINATION. GOI BELIEVES THAT ITS POLICY IS NOT "AGRESSIVE," BUT IT IS FIRM AND WILL BE PUSHED STRONGLY.

3. BASIC STATEMENT OF NI POLICY IS CONTAINED IN A SPEECH MADE IN DAIL BY PM COSGRAVE ON MAY 6 (COPIES AIR-POUCHED TO IRISH DESK). CENTERPIECE OF THE SPEECH IS REITERATION OF A COMMITMENT MADE IN A JOINT COMMUNIQUE AFTER WILSON/COSGRAVE MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 17, 1974. BOTH PMS REAFFIRMED A COMMITMENT TO POWER-SHARING IN NI AND ALSO TO THE "IRISH DIMENSION." THE COMMUNIQUE SAID:

"ON NORTHERN IRELAND BOTH THE TAOISEACH AND THE PRIME MINISTER AGREED IN THE INTEREST OF ALL THE PROPLE LIVING THERE-AND OF THE PROPLE OF BOTH COUNTRIES - THAT PEACE AND STABILITY SHOULD BE RESTORED ON A BASIS COMMANDING WIDESPREAD ACCEPTANCE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY THERE. THEY REAFFIRMED THAT THIS OBJECTIVE CAN BE ACHIEVED ONLY IF BOTH SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND SHARE POWER IN GOVERNMENT. THE TAOISEACH AND PRIME MINISTER CONFIRMED THAT ANY ENDURING POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS MUST TAKE

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ACCOUNT OF THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN THE TWO PARTS OF IRELAND. THIS IRISH DIMENSION WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF FURTHER CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS AND ALSO WITH ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES IN NORTHERN IRELAND."

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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 DUBLIN 855

4. MCCOLGAN SIAD THAT GOI WAS NOT BERATING THE BRITISH BUT EXPRES-  
SING REGRET THAT ONE OF GOI MINISTERS HAD GIVEN THE FALSE IMPRESSION  
THAT GOI WAS WILLING TO WEAKEN ITS STAND ON POWER-SHARING. THERE  
IS, INDEED, CONCERN HERE ABOUT BRITISH RESOLVE, BUT THERE IS "DEEP  
CHAGRIN" ABOUT THE CRUISE-O'BRIEN STATEMENT. (WE ARE RELIABLY  
INFORMED BY ANOTHER SOURCE THAT THIS WAS CENTRAL ISSUE AT A CABINET  
MEETING AND THAT ALL THE MINISTERS PRESENT VOTED AGAINST CRUISE-  
O'BRIEN AT THE END OF THE MEETING. THIS INFORMATION SHOULD BE  
PROTECTED.)

5. FONMIN FITZGERALD WILL BE MEETING NI SECSTATE MAY 15 AND WILL  
STRESS GOI FIRMNESS ON POWER-SHARING. SECOND POINT IN FONMIN'S  
APPROACH WILL BE EXPRESSION OF CONCERN OVER HIGH RATE OF SECTARIAN  
ASSASSINATIONS IN NI AND THE LOW SUCCESS RATE OF SECURITY FORCES  
IN DEALING WITH THEM. GOI STATISTICS SHOW 73 NI DEATHS FROM VIOLENCE  
IN FIRST FOUR MONTHS OF 1975. OF THESE 73, 43 WERE SECTARIAN  
ASSASSINATIONS, AND 33 OF THE VICTIMS WERE CATHOLICS (AS AGAINST  
10 PROTESTANTS).

6. MCCOLGAN HAD NOTHING TO ADD TO REFTELS' INFORMATION ON GLOOMY  
PROSPECTS FOR NI CONVENTION. HE DID ADD ONE NEW NOTE OF PESSIMISM:  
AFTER THE CONVENTION COLLAPSES, AS EVERYONE EXPECTS, THE SDLP IS  
ALSO IN SERIOUS DANGER OF DISINTEGRATION. ITS BEST MEN HAVE BEEN  
LEADING AN EXTREMELY PRECARIOUS EXISTENCE FOR LAST SEVERAL YEARS,  
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AND THEY FEEL THEY ARE LOSING ABILITY TO COPE IF THEY CANNOT BE GIVEN A REAL POLITICAL ROLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. MANY OF THE TOP SDLP MEN SIMPLY CANNOT MAKE A LIVING AT POLITICS. THEY HAVE BEEN DRAWING SMALL SALARIES FOR INTERMITTENT PERIODS AND ARE ACTUALLY HAVING DIFFICULTY SUPPORTING THEIR FAMILIES. SOME OF THE BEST MAY EVEN BE CONSIDERING EMIGRATION.

7. COMMENTS: THERE ARE A NUMBER OF INTERESTING POINTS IN THIS BRIEFING. FIRST, WE HAVE IMPRESSION THAT GOI HAS OVERCOME AN INTERNAL CRISIS OF SORTS IN RESTRAINING CONOR CRUISE-O'BRIEN WITHOUT A SERIOUS PUBLIC SPLIT. HE MUST BE WELL AWARE THAT HE HAS BEEN CHASTISED, ALTHOUGH THE WORLD AT LARGE MAY NOT HAVE GOTTEN THE MESSAGE SO CLEARLY. WE HAVE LONG FELT THAT CRUISE-O'BRIEN'S BRILLIANT INTELLECT AND UNDISCIPLINED EGO WOULD PRESENT A CHALLENGE TO GOI WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE FACED AT SOME POINT. IF THIS HAS NOW BEEN DONE SUCCESSFULLY, GOI SHOULD BE ABLE TO SPEAK MUCH MORE CLEARLY IN THE FUTURE ON NI POLICY.

8. MCCOLGAN'S COMMENT ON DEMORALIZED CONDITION OF SDLP HAS VERY SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS. ONE OF THE FEW POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE CONTINUING NI CRISIS HAS BEEN THAT CATHOLIC COMMUNITY HAS HAD MODERATE AND EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP. SHOULD THIS LEADERSHIP BE FORCED OUT, ONLY THE EXTREMES WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO BENEFIT.

9. GOI HAS GIVEN US NOTICE OF A REQUEST IT MAY EVENTUALLY MAKE FOR US SUPPORT (PARA 2 ABOVE). FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OUR MEMORY, THIS IS A CLEAR, REASONABLE, AND VALID REQUEST FROM THE IRISH ON THE SUBJECT OF NI. IT IS, HOWEVER, ALSO HYPOTHETICAL. WE SOO NO NEED TO TAKE ANY US POLICY DECISIONS AT THIS POINT. HERE IN DUBLIN, WE ARE ALSO AWARE THAT WE ARE NOT CAPABLE OF ASSESSING THE WHOLE PROBLEM, SINCE THE QUESTION OF BRITISH DETERMINATION IS THE BIGGEST PART OF IT.

10. FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, WE AGREE WITH GO THAT A BRITISH WITHDRAWAL FROM NI (BEFORE A PLITICAL SOLUTION) WOULD PROBABLY LEAD TO A DISASTROUS CIVIL CONFLICT. WE ALSO AGREE WITH GOI, AND WITH MOST BRITISH AND IRISH JOURNALISTS, THAT BRITAIN IS FED UP WITH THE IRISH PROBLEM, HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO WITHDRAW "EMOTIONALLY" FROM NI, AND WOULD PROBABLY WELCOME AN EXCUSE TO PULL OUT ENTIRELY. A DECISION TO RETURN POWER TO PROTESTANT SUPREMACISTS WOULD BE HALFWAY ALONG TOWARD A PULL-OUT. THE IRISH MIGHT WELL CONSIDER IT CONFIDENTIAL

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THE BEGINNING OF THE FINAL SLIDE. IN THIS CIRCUMSTANCE, MANY WESTERN GOVERNMENTS WOULD PROBABLY GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO AN IRISH REQUEST FOR A WORD WITH THE BRITISH.

11. THIS PROCESS OF REASONING, HOWEVER, OVERLOOKS THE FACT THAT

BRITISH DECISION-MAKERS CAN SURELY PRECEIVE THE SAME PROBLEMS, IF  
ONLY BY READING THEIR PRESS (AS SEE "THE ECONOMIST" MAY 10). BRITAIN  
MUST SURELY DREAD AN IRISH CONFLAGRATION FAR MORE THAN WE DO.  
FOR THIS REASON ALONE, IT SEEMS LIKELY TO US THAT THE BRITISH WILL  
CONTINUE TO DO THEIR DUTY.

REND AHL

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